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LITTLE BIBLE BOYS



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A BOOK
of
Little Bible Boys

By
ARTHUR W. SPALDING

“Whosoever shall receive this child in My name
receiveth Me.”—JESUS.



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A Word to Parents

The stories of the Bible are the greatest source of heroic inspiration. They are the heritage of the Christian child; and from the time he can understand speech, they should be given him. Many parents find difficulty in selecting and adapting to the child's age interesting Bible stories; and to assist fathers and mothers in choosing and putting into simple form some of these stories is the object of this little book.

It is not in place here to discuss the science of story-telling; but two obvious essentials may well be mentioned. First, simplicity of language. While the narrative portions of the Bible are generally simple in diction, familiarity with a child's vocabulary will give the story-teller an instinctive sense of when a simpler phrase or word is needed. And the story must be in simple language. Second, adaptation. Certain tales, like that of Joseph, are too lengthy for one story, and either they must be made "continued stories," or they must be condensed, bringing out only the points that strike the keynote selected; for example, how his dreams *came true*. On the other hand, there are life sketches of great human interest, like that of Mephibosheth, in which the details are so meager as to necessitate a judicious use of outside information and of imagination in amplifying into stories. The art of adaptation of stories is an essential to success.

Stories must be studied if they are to be told.

If the content and style of these stories are found to interest the children, they may serve in some degree as models for the hundreds of tales of daring, of endurance, of courage, and of self-sacrifice, which the Bible contains.

A. W. S.



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They sold him to the merchants for a slave.

THE BOY

Whose Dreams Came True



LONG, long time ago there lived a boy named Joseph. He had ten half brothers, and he had one own brother, and he had a father; but he had no mother, for his mother was dead.

And now that he had no mother, his father loved him very much, but his half brothers hated him. His father made him a beautiful coat of many colors, such as none of his brothers had; and so they hated him all the more. And his father used to tell him stories, wonderful stories; for his father was a wonderful man, who had dreamed dreams, and seen angels, and talked with God. And little Joseph used to wish he could dream dreams, just as his father had.

And so one night, he did. He dreamed that he was out in the harvest field, binding wheat with his brothers, and his sheaf stood right up in the middle, and all his brothers' sheaves came around and bowed down to his sheaf. And that meant that his brothers should bow down to him. Then he went and told this dream to his brothers. But they scowled at him, and they said, "Do you think you will rule over us?" And they hated him all the more.

Then another night he dreamed another dream. He dreamed that he stood out under the sky, and the sun and the moon and the eleven stars bowed to him. And that meant that his brothers, and their mother, and their father should all bow down to him. Then he went and told this dream to his brothers. But they scowled at him, and they shook their fists at him; and they said, "Do you think that we and our mother and your father will come and bow down to you?" And they hated him yet more and more.

Then one day, the ten half brothers all went far away to Shechem, with their sheep; and they were gone for many, many days. So their father sent Joseph to find them. And he walked and he walked and



The sun and the moon and the eleven stars bowed to him.

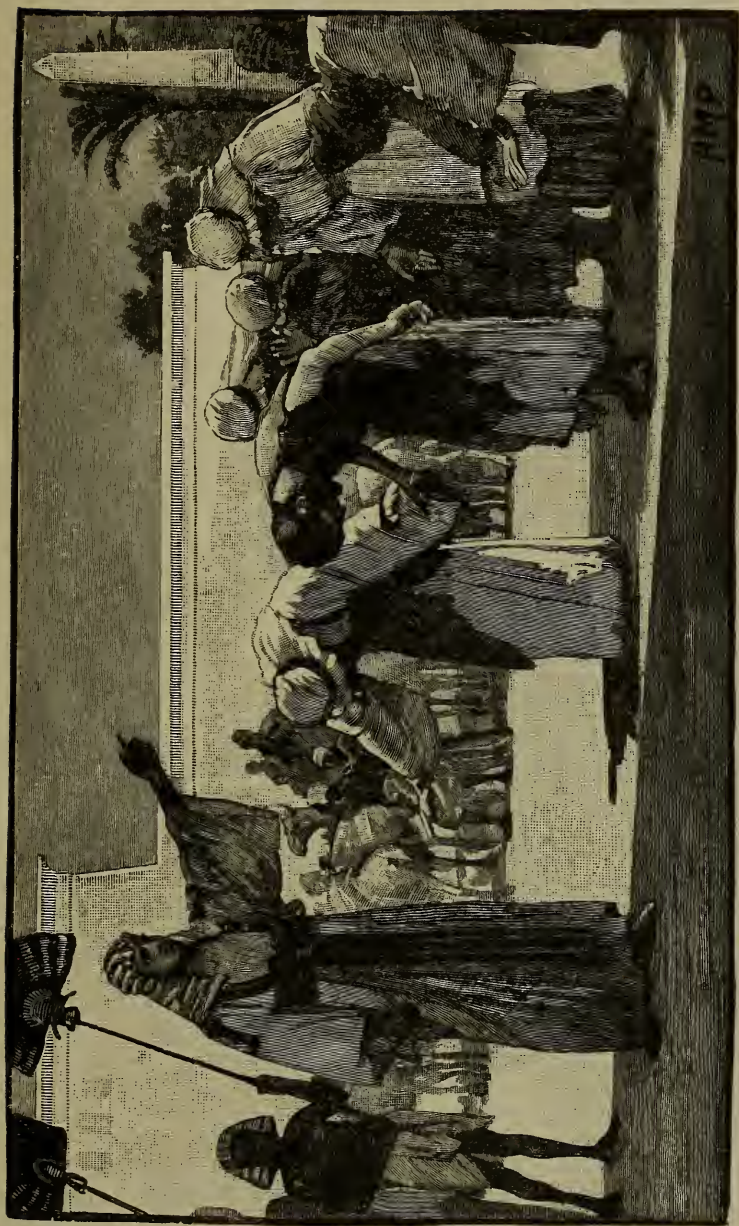
he walked all day, till he came to Shechem. But he didn't find them there. Then a man told him they were at Dothan. And he walked and he walked and he walked till he came to Dothan; and there he saw them. And they saw him. They saw him

coming, all tired out and hungry; but they didn't pity him a bit, for they hated him. And they said: "Here comes this dreamer. Let's kill him, and tell our father that some beast killed him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

So they caught him; and they scowled at him, and they struck him, and they pulled off his beautiful coat of many colors, and they threw him down into a deep hole, and left him there to die.

But pretty soon they saw some merchants coming; and they pulled Joseph up out of the hole, and sold him to the merchants for a slave. Poor Joseph begged them not to sell him; but they would not hear, for they hated him.

The merchants took Joseph away off into Egypt, and there they sold him for a slave. But he grew to be a great man in Egypt, till he was next to the king. And one day, when there was a famine over all the land, his ten wicked brothers came down to Egypt to buy corn. And they came to Joseph, who was ruler over all the land. But



They came and bowed down to him, just as his dreams had said they would.

they didn't know it was Joseph, for he had grown to be a man; and besides, they thought Joseph must be dead. So they came and bowed down to him, just as his dreams had said they would. He was good to them. He didn't tell them he was Joseph; but he gave them corn, and he sent back their money with them. But he said they must bring their youngest brother with them the next time they came.

So the next time they came, they brought his brother. And when they started to go home this time, Joseph put his silver cup in his brother's sack, and then he sent a man after them to catch them and bring them back, as though they had stolen his cup. And he said that the one in whose sack the cup was found should be his slave. He said this to try them; for he wanted to know if they hated his brother as they had hated him, and if they would let that brother be a slave, too. Then they all came and fell down before him again, and one of them, whose name was Judah, begged him to let their brother go, for he said it

would kill their father to lose this son too. And Judah said he would stay in his place, and be a slave.

Then Joseph knew that they were no more so cruel as they had been to him.



He sent back their money with them.

And he burst out crying, and said: "I am Joseph. Does my father yet live?" Then they were so frightened they didn't know what to say. But Joseph said: "Don't be afraid. I'll not hurt you. I will help you."



Then they all came and fell down before him again.

And he came and kissed his brother, and then he kissed them all; for he had forgiven them.

And Joseph told them to go and get his father, and bring him down to Egypt, and to get all their families, and he would care for them while the famine lasted. So they went and got their father and all their families, and came down to Egypt. And they all bowed down before Joseph; and so his dreams came true. But Joseph bowed down before his father, and he kissed him, and he took him and he took them all, and he gave them houses, and he gave them pastures, and he gave them fields, all in the best part of the land. So he took care of them, and they were happy all their lives.



There he drifts out in the rushes.



The Little Slave Boy

Who Became a Prince



HERE stands a little cabin by the dark river. Do you see it? Just a little clay cabin almost any rain would wash away—but here in the land of Egypt it never rains. Dark it is, oh, dark! But away in the east, the light is beginning to glimmer.

Hark! From the little cabin faintly comes a baby's cry. It is very low and very short, as though a mother hushed it quickly. Watch! The little door opens slowly, and a woman comes out. Then a girl comes out. And they shut the door. The girl is bareheaded and barefooted. And the woman is barefooted; but over her head she wears a shawl, and she wraps it close around her and around something she is carrying.

Down the path they go toward the river. And they walk along so still, so still. Never a word they say. They come to the river, and turn and walk down the bank a way, until they come to where the rushes grow, and there they stop and look around. It is growing lighter and lighter; the morning is coming fast. But no one is in sight.

And now the woman unwraps the shawl and brings out her burden. What do you think it is? A little boat with a cover, just about so-o-o long, made of rushes twisted together and covered with pitch. And what do you think is in the little boat? The woman lifts the cover and looks within, and the girl looks, and they see (as they think, for the last time) a little rosy baby, fast asleep. And the mother stoops down to kiss him; but she stops, for she is afraid she might wake him. She shuts down the cover, and she looks up to heaven for just a moment to pray. Then she takes the little boat, and down to the river's brink she goes, and she pushes it out among the rushes that stand so proudly waving there.

“Miriam,” she says to the little girl, “stay and watch what becomes of the baby.” And away she speeds to get to her home before anyone shall see her.

What has she done? Has she thrown away her baby? Oh, let me tell you. She was a poor Hebrew slave woman. Her husband, the baby’s father, had to work hard every day in making brick for the cruel Egyptians, and often she herself was made to work. And worse than that, Pharaoh, the king, had said that every baby boy of the Hebrews, when any one of his people should find it, should be thrown into the river and drowned.

And this mother had kept her baby boy hidden three months. But then he was so large she could not keep him hidden any longer; and so she prayed God to keep him, and she put him in this little basket boat and left him to God’s care there on the river.

And there he drifts out in the rushes, fast asleep, while his sister Miriam watches. And the morning comes on, and the light

spreads over the sky. Then, just as the sun begins to lift his red round face above the earth, down to the river comes—who do you think?—the daughter of Pharaoh the king, and all her maids with her. She is coming to bathe in the river and worship there; for she and all the Egyptians worship the river and the sun. So along she walks by the river's side, and she comes to where the little boat is drifting, drifting, drifting in the rushes.

“Go,” she says to one of her maids, “and fetch me that little boat.” And the maid plunges into the water and gets to the little boat, and draws it to the river's edge. Then the daughter of Pharaoh stoops down and lifts the cover and looks in. And the baby opens his eyes, but it is not his mother he sees, and the poor little baby cries.

“Oh, you poor little baby!” says the king's daughter. “This is one of the Hebrew children.”

Then up comes Miriam, and says, “Shall I go and call a Hebrew woman to nurse the baby for you?”

“Run!” says the king’s daughter. And Miriam runs, runs to her home, and brings the baby’s own mother back.

And Pharaoh’s daughter says to her, “Take this baby and nurse it for me, and I will pay your wages.” Oh, what a glad mother! How she thanks God as she takes her baby home, where none shall make her afraid any more!

But now the baby was claimed by the daughter of Pharaoh as her own. Though he was a Hebrew slave baby, she said he should become a prince, and should finally be the king of Egypt. She let the mother keep him for many a year. And all that time, his mother taught him to love God and to do right, no matter how hard it was.

Then when he was twelve years old, the daughter of Pharaoh, who had often come to see him, sent for him and took him away. And she called his name Moses, which means, “Drawn out,” because he was drawn out of the water. And she put him in the schools of the priests, who worshiped false gods. And they taught him many, many

things, and he became very wise. But they could not make him forget the true God; because his good mother, the slave woman, had taught him when he was a boy.

He lived in the great, beautiful palaces of Pharaoh, and in the grand, wonderful temples; and he was called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He was very noble-looking, and he was very wise and skillful; and all the people loved him. They loved to see him in his great golden chariot, as he led the soldiers out to battle; and they loved to see him in his pure white robes, as he walked with the priests in the temple; and they loved to see him stand by the throne, with the golden ball and the ivory rod in his hand, as the people came for justice. "How wonderful," they whispered, "that a little slave boy should become so noble a prince!" But they never said it out loud, for they thought he would not like to hear it said he had been the baby of a slave.

But there came a day when Moses went out to see how his people, the Hebrews, were getting along. For he loved them, and

he was not ashamed to be one of them; because they were God's people, and they were his people. Though he was so great a prince, he never forgot that he belonged to the slave people.

And he found an Egyptian striking a Hebrew. Then he was angry, and he killed the Egyptian, and started to set his people free. But when Pharaoh heard of it, he was filled with rage, and would have killed him. So Moses fled away. He would not be a prince if he could not help his people, the slaves. And he was out in the mountain country for many, many years; but at last, God brought him back to Egypt and set him to work to deliver his people. With many wonderful works, God made Moses great again in the eyes of the Egyptians, greater far than when he was a prince. And he took the Hebrews, the children of Israel, out of Egypt, and brought them to the Promised Land.

So this is the story of the little slave boy who became a prince of Egypt, and then a prince with God.



He thought Eli was calling him. So up he jumped.



A Little Boy WHO LISTENED

NCE upon a time, there was a little boy named Samuel. He lived with the good priest Eli, in the house of God. He had work to do every morning, and every night, and all day long. In the morning, he would open the doors of the house, and sweep out the rooms, and put everything in place. And at night, he closed the doors, and trimmed the lamps, and put everything in place again, before he lay down to sleep. And he used to run errands for Eli, and bring wood and water, just as little boys do nowadays. And Eli taught him to read, and he taught him to pray to the great Jehovah God in the heavens.

And Jehovah looked down upon the little boy Samuel, morning and night, and all day long; and He saw how faithful he was

to bring the wood and the water, and to open the doors on time, and to sweep, and to trim the lamps, and everything. And He said: "I love the little boy Samuel, he is so faithful and good. I will give him something greater to do. And I will go and talk with him Myself."

So one night, after Samuel had done his work, and had lain down on his little bed to sleep, he heard somebody calling him, "Samuel." And he thought it was Eli calling him. So up he jumped and ran in where Eli was lying on his bed. And he said, "Here I am, for you called me."

"No, little Samuel," said Eli, "I didn't call you. Go and lie down again."

So Samuel went and lay down again. But he hadn't yet taken the littlest nap, when again he heard somebody calling him, "*Sam-uel*." And up he jumped and ran in to Eli. "Here I am," he said, "for you called me."

"No, little Samuel," said Eli, "I didn't call you. Go and lie down again." So Samuel went and lay down again.

But soon he heard somebody calling him again. And though he was sleepy and tired, he didn't say, "Well, Eli doesn't want me; I'm going to sleep." No; but up he jumped just as quickly as before, and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you *did* call me."

Then Eli knew that it was the Lord God who was calling the child. And he said gently: "Little Samuel, go and lie down. And if He calls you again, say, 'Speak, Jehovah, for Thy servant heareth.'"

So Samuel went and lay down again. But this time, he was all awake, and he trembled to think the great Jehovah would speak with him. And he lay there with his eyes wide open, and his ears listening, all ready to answer when the Lord should call.

And Jehovah called, just as before, "Samuel, *Sam-uel!*" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for Thy servant heareth." And Jehovah talked with Samuel, and told him what he should say to the people. And when the people heard him, they said: "Little Samuel has seen Jehovah God. He shall be called 'the seer of Jehovah.'"



He stopped at the brook, and picked up five smooth stones.



The Shepherd Boy Who Slew a Giant



IN the days when there were giants, there lived in the land of Israel a shepherd boy named David. He was the youngest of seven brothers. The others had

grown up and gone to the wars; but David was left in the wilderness to keep the sheep.

David had a sling that he could sling stones with; and when the wolves and the bears came to carry off his sheep, he drove them away with his sling. But one day there came a lion, a big yellow lion; and he picked up a lamb in his mouth, and ran away with it. And David ran after him, and he caught the lion, and he killed him; and he took the poor little lamb back to its mamma.

And then there came a bear, a big black bear; and he took up a little lamb in his

mouth, and ran off with it. And David ran after him, and he caught him. And when the bear stood up on his hind feet to fight, David caught hold of him, and killed him; and he took the poor little lamb back to its mamma.

One day, he was out all alone with his sheep, when a man came running to him from his father's house, and said, "Your father wants you." So he left the man with his sheep, and went to his father. And his father said: "David, here are ten loaves of bread and a bushel of parched corn that I want you to take to your brothers in the army. And here are ten cheeses for you to give to their captain." So David loaded the bread and the corn and the cheeses on a donkey, and took a man along to help him, and so he came to the army.

Now there was a giant there to fight the Israelites; and he was down in the valley, shouting: "Give me a man to fight with me! I'm a Philistine, and you are Israelites. If he kills me, all the Philistines will be your servants; but if I kill him, all the Israelites

shall be our servants. If you are not afraid, give me one of your men to fight with me!"

But no one would go to fight with him; for he was ten feet tall, and he had a great brazen shield and a brazen helmet and a brazen coat of mail, and brazen armor for his legs; and he had a spear whose head weighed twenty-five pounds, and a sword that another man could hardly lift. So everyone was afraid of him.

But when David heard his voice, and saw that everybody was afraid of him, he said: "I will go and fight this giant; and the God who helped me kill the lion and the bear, will help me kill this giant." So he started down into the valley. He had no helmet, and he had no shield, and he had no sword; but he went down with just his shepherd's staff and his sling. Now when he got down to the bottom of the valley, he stopped at the brook, and picked up five smooth stones, and put them into his shepherd's bag. Then he climbed up the bank, and went to meet the giant.

But when the giant saw him coming, and saw how little he was, and saw that he had no helmet nor shield nor sword, but only a staff and a sling, he was very angry. And he shouted: "Am I a dog, that you come to drive me away with a stick? Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the fowls of the air and to the beasts of the field."

But David wasn't afraid of him. He shouted back at him, so everybody could hear: "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a shield; but I come to you in the name of Jehovah of hosts, whom you have defied. And He will give you into my hand, that all the world may know there is a God in Israel." Then he ran forward to meet the giant, and the giant strode forward to meet David. A man came before him, bearing his shield; and the giant got ready his spear and his sword, and he pushed back his helmet on his head, and cursed David by all his gods.

But David stopped, and he took a stone out of his shepherd's bag, and put it in his

sling. Then he swung it around his head, and slung it at the giant. And the stone whizzed straight toward the giant, and struck him right in the forehead, from which he had pushed back his helmet. And the stone sank in, and the giant fell.

Then how the Israelites shouted! And they all ran forward, and the Philistines ran away.

So this is how the shepherd boy who trusted in God, slew the great giant who despised God.



Mephibosheth's Father and His Friend David.

The Sad Little PRINCE

Who Was Made Glad



LONG time ago, there lived in the land of Israel a little boy, just five years old, named Mephibosheth. He wasn't a poor little boy. He had a beautiful great house to live in, with palm trees and fountains and flowers. And he had beautiful clothes to wear, blue and gold and scarlet, and all of silk and fine twined linen. And he had the best food, and the best bed, and the best playthings, and the best servants to take care of him; and he had the best father in all the land. For he was a prince: his father was Jonathan, and his grandfather was Saul, the king of Israel.

And he had a friend whom, though he had never seen, he had heard about ever since he could remember; for his father,

Jonathan, often talked to little Mephibosheth about him, and told how good he was, and how beautiful, and how sweet his voice was. And that friend's name was David. "And if ever anything should happen to thy father, little one, flee to David; for David will take care of thee." So said his father when the days were growing dark.

And one of those dark mornings, little Mephibosheth's father came to tell him good-by. And he was clothed in gloomy iron armor, for he was going far to the north to fight a battle. "Good-by, little one," said Mephibosheth's father, as he kissed him; "good-by. May God keep thee! May God keep thee! Good-by." And he kissed him again, and gave him back to his nurse. And away he rode, with all his men, to fight the battle in the north. And every day and every day, little Mephibosheth would watch from the palace windows, down the valley and over the hills, to see his father come back. But he did not come.

At last, one morning, the city was all in confusion and noise; for there had come a man out of the battle in the north, and he had dust on his head, and his clothes were all torn. And he cried, "All the men of Israel are slain!" And after him came another; and he said, "All the men of Israel are scattered and driven away." And after him came another, who cried, "Saul is dead, and Jonathan is dead also."

Then all the people lifted up their voices and wept. And they told it in the palace where little Mephibosheth lived. "Ah, little one, little one," cried his nurse, "thy father is slain. The great prince of Israel is dead. Thou wilt never see thy father again." And at that, poor little Mephibosheth, who could understand nothing of all this, except that he should not see his dear and noble and loving father again,—at that, little Mephibosheth cried. But his nurse and all the servants were wringing their hands, and crying: "What shall we do? Oh, what shall we do? Our wicked enemies will come down and kill us. For

Jonathan is dead." And they started to run away. Away to the Jordan River they would go, and get across it, where they could not be found.

So some took up their jewels and their money; and some snatched up their costly clothes; and some picked up cushions; and some picked up vases and jars; and some picked up food; and they all hastened, crowding and pushing one another, out of the gates of the city, and away down the long, dusty, rocky road to the Jordan.

Little Mephibosheth stood crying in all the confusion, for he did not know what to do. He did not know what was the trouble, only that his father was dead. He should never see his father again: they all said so. But David! David would take care of him. Had not his father told him David would take care of him?

Then suddenly came his nurse, her arms full of bundles and treasures. She saw poor little Mephibosheth standing there crying. Oh, her eyes were wild, and her breath came pantingly; for she was afraid,

and she knew not what to do except what all the people were doing. But she would not leave little Mephibosheth behind. Putting all her bundles into one arm, she picked him up with the other, and hurried on.

And just as they were passing through the gate, the people crowded and pushed, and tore little Mephibosheth from her arm. He fell on the hard, rocky pavement, and broke the bones of both his poor little feet. Then his nurse threw down all she had, and she gathered him up in her arms. While he cried and cried with the pain, she bore him on as fast as she could go, until they were safely across the Jordan.

Then they came to the house of a rich man named Machir, in Lo-debar, where Mephibosheth's nurse hid him away. There he stayed for many and many a month. And ever in his lonesome hiding place, he mourned for his father, and ever he wished for David. But his people would not take him to David; and he could not walk, for his poor feet had been made forever lame when he fell.

But after a while, he heard how all the people had taken David to make him king. And from all around, they were going up to Hebron, to make David king. Mephibosheth was glad; for was not David his friend? His eyes shone gladness as he saw the people go by; and he waved his hands and shouted them good-speed from his window, as they went up to make David king.

Yet, strange as you may think it, David did not know of Mephibosheth; for David had been far, far away in the woods and the mountains in the days when Mephibosheth was born, and he knew little of the people of Saul. But one day after David was made king, he called for an old servant of Saul's, and he said, "Ziba, is there any one left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

And Ziba said, "Why, yes; Jonathan has a son, Mephibosheth, and he is lame."

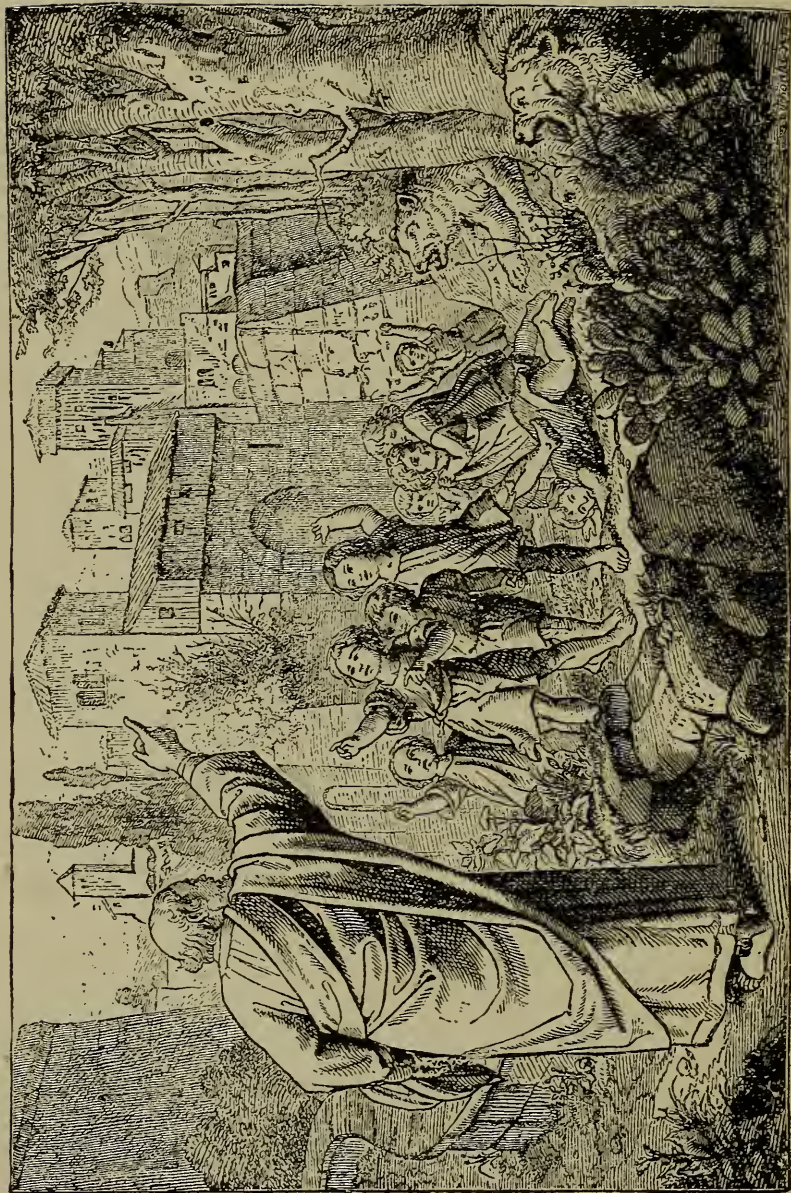
"Where does he live?" asked David.

"He is in the house of Machir," answered Ziba, "who lives in Lo-debar."

And then, O glad time! David sent for Mephibosheth to come to him. And Mephibosheth, happy that at last his father's friend David had found him, gathered up all his belongings, and they put him upon a gentle beast, and carried him back across the Jordan, and over the hills of Benjamin, and down the valley to Jerusalem, to the palace of David. He came before the throne of David, and he bowed himself to the ground before David.

And then the sweetest voice in Israel softly called, "Mephibosheth." And Mephibosheth said, "Behold, thy servant." David answered: "Do not be afraid. I loved your father, Jonathan, and I will be kind to you for his sake. I will get back for you all the land your grandfather Saul had; and you shall live in my house, and eat at my own table always."

So at last David had found Mephibosheth; and all that Jonathan had promised that David would do, he did, and more. And then Mephibosheth, who had been so sad a little prince, was very glad.



In the name of God, he cursed them.

The Bad Boys of Bethel



HERE was a rough, stony road, going uphill. There was a bald-headed man walking along the road. There was a crowd of boys coming down the road out of the city. And the city was Bethel.

He was a good man, and his name was Elisha. But they were bad children, those boys of Bethel. Their fathers and mothers had not taught them to be good to older people, nor to love God. Elisha had just seen Elijah, the great prophet, go up into heaven, and he had told the people of it. But these boys and their fathers and mothers made fun of it.

So they came down the road, and when they saw Elisha toiling along toward the city, they made fun of him. They picked up sticks and pretended to walk as he did,

and they laughed and jeered at him, and they shouted: "Go up, thou baldhead! Go up, thou baldhead! Elijah went up! Go up too, thou baldhead!"

Elisha would not have cared for himself; but he knew that if those children grew up to be so naughty toward older people, and to hate God and His servants, they would do even more wicked things. And he must teach a lesson. So he turned around and looked at them, and in the name of God, he cursed them.

Then, oh, how the children screamed and ran and screamed! For out of the woods by the roadside came two she-bears, and they ran right among the children, and they caught this one, and they caught that one, and they caught another one, and they tore them. And the children ran and screamed and ran; and the bears ran after them, and they caught more, until they had caught forty-two of the bad boys of Bethel.

And the rest of the children ran into the city and told the people how the bears had torn so many. And they told the

fathers and mothers of the children who had been torn. And then those fathers and mothers wished they had taught their children to be good and kind to people. And all the people remembered, ever after, the time when God was insulted, and His prophet was insulted, and how God had sent the bears to punish those children. And none of the children, I hope, were ever so wicked again.



The child opened his eyes, and he was alive.



The Boy Who Was Raised from the Dead

ONCE, when the prophet Elisha was on earth, there lived a good woman in a town called Shunem. And through that town the prophet Elisha used often to go. And *when* he went through that town, he used to stop and stay with that good woman and her husband.

So finally, one day, the woman said to her husband: "I see that this is a holy man of God. Let us make a little room on the house for him, and put in it a bed and a table and a stool and a candlestick; and this shall be his own room, for him to stay in whenever he comes this way."

So they made the little room on the house, and they put in it the bed, and the table,

and the stool, and the candlestick, with a candle in it to be lighted. And then, one day pretty soon, along came the good prophet Elisha with his servant Gehazi; and he stopped at that house again, as he always did. He was very tired, and the good woman showed him at once his room. And he looked in, and he saw the nice clean bed for him to lie on, and he saw the little table for him to put his Bible on, and he saw the strong stool for him to sit on, and he saw the candlestick with the candle in it all waiting to be lighted for him to see by. And he was very glad.

So he lay down on the bed to rest. And he said to his servant Gehazi, "What shall we do for this woman who is so kind as to give us this fine room?"

"Why," said his servant Gehazi, "she has no child."

Then Elisha sent for her; and when she came, she stood in the door. And he said to her, "About this time next year you shall have a son." And the woman was so glad she could hardly believe him; for, you

see, she had no little boy and no little girl, and she did so long for one of her own.

And sure enough, next year about that time, a baby boy was born to her. And if I could tell you how happy that good woman of Shunem was, then I could tell you how much every mother loves her every little boy, which I can't.

And that little boy grew, and he grew. And he was a beautiful boy, I have no doubt (though of course I never saw him), with his happy smile, and his dark eyes, and his curly black hair all over his round little head. And his mother was very proud of him, and very glad for him.

And then, one day, he went out to the field where his father, with all the men, was reaping grain. It was a hot day, and the boy stood out in the sun with his father, watching the reapers. And all of a sudden, he cried to his father, "My head! My head!" And his father called a big boy, and said, "Carry him to his mother."

So the big boy carried the little boy to his mother in the house. And she took

him up on her lap, and she rocked him, and she cuddled him, while all the time the great fear was in her heart, "Am I going to lose my boy, the only boy I ever had?" Yes, she must. For he sat on her lap till noon, and then he died.

The mother said never a word, but she got up and took him into the prophet's room, and she laid him on the prophet's bed. And she shed never a tear, for her heart ached too much to mourn or cry; but she went out and shut the door, and left him there.

Then she sent for her husband, and said, "Send me a young man to saddle the ass, that I may go to the man of God."

Now her husband didn't know that his little boy was dead; and he said: "Why, this is neither new moon nor Sabbath. Why will you go to the prophet?"

But she only answered, "It shall be well."

And when the ass was ready saddled, she sat upon it, and said to her servant, "Drive fast." And she rode and she rode



She fell at t' prophet's feet and thanked him.

and she rode, far, far away to the mountain where the man of God was. And when she had come to him, she threw herself down at his feet, and cried: "Did I ask for a son? Did I not say, Do not deceive me?" Then he knew that her little boy was dead.

And he said to his servant Gehazi, "Take my staff, and go fast, and lay it upon the face of the child." And his servant Gehazi went.

But the mother said to Elisha, "I will not leave thee." So he rose and went with her. And his servant Gehazi went on ahead, and came and laid the staff upon the face of the little boy, but there was neither voice nor hearing. And he turned back to Elisha, and said, "The child is not awaked." So Elisha and the mother came to the house in Shunem. And Elisha went into the room, and there the little boy lay dead upon his bed. And he shut the door, and kneeling down, he prayed. Then he rose and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon *his* mouth, and his eyes upon *his* eyes, and his hands upon *his* hands. And he felt

the little boy's flesh grow warm. Then he rose and walked *down* the room, and he walked back *up* the room. And again he lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon *his* mouth, and his eyes upon *his* eyes, and his hands upon *his* hands. And the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes, and *he was alive*.

Then Elisha called his servant Gehazi, and said, "Call this Shunammite." And when she came, Elisha said to her, "Take up thy son."

And she looked upon him on the bed where she had laid him; and his eyes looked into her eyes, and his lips smiled at her once again, and his hands stretched out toward her. And, oh, how happy that dear mother was then! And she fell at the prophet's feet and thanked him.

Then she clasped her boy to her heart, and went out, more glad for him even than she had been when first, a little baby, he had lain in her arms.

So this is the wonderful tale of the little boy who died and was raised from the dead.



She cried, "Treason! Treason!"

The Little Boy Who Was Hid in *the* Temple



H, what a terrible time! Men running and shouting, and crying and hiding, and falling down dead! And women weeping and wringing their hands, and begging to live!

The baby Joash waked from his nap at all the horrible noise, and sitting up in his bed, he cried for his nurse. Just one year old he was, this littlest son of the dead king of Judah, and here he was all alone — and such a horrible noise! What could be the matter?

Then he saw some of his sisters. They rushed to the door of his room, and they knocked it open, and they ran in crying. Then his brothers came running in, and

after them were men with swords. And the men caught little Joash's brothers there, and killed them.

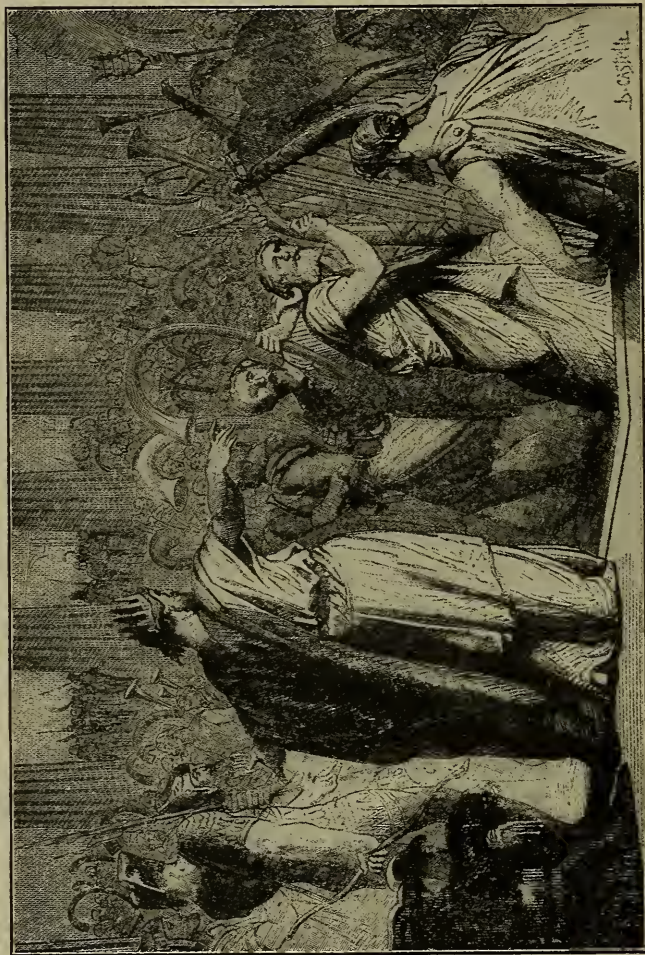
But little Joash's nurse ran in, and she picked up the little Joash in her arms, and they were knocked down, and they fell among the brothers, the king's sons that were slain. And his nurse kept very still, and little Joash kept very still, and the wicked men went away.

Oh, who had done this terrible thing? It was his wicked, wicked old grandmother, Athaliah. For she hated God, and she hated all the king's children, and so she sent the soldiers to kill them.

Little Joash lay there, and his nurse. And pretty soon came stepping, stepping softly in, Jehosheba, little Joash's aunt. She looked at this one, and she looked at that one, of the poor dead princes, and she cried; for she loved them. And then she came to little Joash and his nurse, lying there so still. And she touched him, and he stirred. And she gave a soft little cry of joy, for she found he was alive.

Then she took him up, and his nurse, and she took them with her, and hid them in a room in the great beautiful temple of God. For she was the wife of the high priest, Jehoiada, who ruled there in the temple, and so she could hide them there. But she and Jehoiada did not tell the wicked Athaliah that they had the little Joash hidden there, and they did not tell the captains, and they did not tell anybody.

So the baby Joash grew up, away back there in that secret room in the temple. He was one year old when he went there. And he grew to be two years old, and could walk. And he grew to be three years old, and could talk. And he grew to be four years old, and could read. And he grew to be five years old, and was learning everything. For the good priest Jehoiada taught him to love God, and to know God's commandments by heart. And his good aunt Jehoshēba told him that he was the king's son, and that he should yet come to be king, and that he must learn all he could, so as to be a good and great king.



King Solomon, who lived long before Joash did, built the beautiful temple where the little boy was hidden.

And so he came to be *six* years old, and *seven* years old. And all this time, his wicked old grandmother Athaliah was reigning over the land. But the people hated her. So Jehoiada called the Levites together, and the captains of the soldiers, and he told them the little prince Joash was alive and staying there in the temple. Then he brought them into the room where Joash stood waiting to see them. And they were glad.

So then Jehoiada said, "Now you must get all your men together, and come up here to the temple with your swords and with your shields, and stand around the little prince Joash, and we will make him king." And they did so. They came up with their swords and with their shields, a great, great many soldiers. And the Levites came out with trumpets, a great, great many trumpets, and they blew their trumpets until the temple rang.

And inside, in the little room, stood Joash with his good aunt Jehosheba. And she kissed him, and she cried over him, and

she laughed over him. And she said, "See that you be a good king, my little boy Joash, and that you love the God whom the wicked Athaliah hates."

Then, while the trumpets blew and blew, out walked Joash with the high priest Jehoiada, and came and stood by a pillar in the court of the temple. And all the people saw him, and they shouted until they cried. And the trumpets rang and rang again. And the soldiers stood on the right side, and they stood on the left side, and they stood in front, so that none could get to the little prince Joash.

Then all was still, while Jehoiada put the crown on his head, and gave him the book of God's law, and poured the sweet holy oil upon his head, and made him king. And all the people shouted again, and sang, and cried, "Long live the king!"

Now that wicked old grandmother Athaliah heard the noise of the people shouting, and she came into the temple court. And she heard the people shouting, "Long live the king!" and she saw the soldiers on

the right side and on the left side and in front; and there by the pillar she saw the king, the little boy she thought she had killed. And she caught hold of her dress and tore it, and she cried, "Treason! Treason!"

But Jehoiada lifted his hand, and he said, "Take her out between the ranks, and if anybody follows her, let him be slain with the sword!" So the soldiers caught hold of her and took her out, because they would not kill her in the temple. But when they came to the gate of the king's house, there they smote her, and she died.

And they brought the little king Joash out from the temple, where he had so long been hidden; and they took him to the king's house, and there he sat upon the king's throne, and he promised that he would keep the law of God and be good to all the people. Then again the people shouted, "Long, long live the king!"



He was only a boy when he was made king.



The BOY KING



THE best king that the people of Judah ever had was named Josiah. He was only a boy when he was made king, just eight years old. His father had been a very wicked king, and his grandfather had been the wickedest of all; but little King Josiah was a good king. The people were doing very wicked things. Instead of loving God and keeping His commandments, they began to worship the sun, which they called Baal. They made images of wood and stone and silver and gold, and set them up in Jerusalem and all the other cities. Then they made altars before them, and burned sweet incense to them, and bowed down and prayed to those dumb images. And they did all sorts of evil things, for so they believed these gods commanded them. They

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stole, and they lied, and they broke the Sabbath, and children hated their parents, and fathers hated their children.

And when the young king Josiah saw how badly things were going, he began to seek the true God Jehovah. And he prayed that God would give him power to change the people from their wicked ways. Then he called his men around, and sent them out to break down the images in his city, Jerusalem. So they broke them down, and ground them up to powder, and Josiah scattered the dust over the graves of those who had worshiped them. And he called upon all the people to come back and worship Jehovah.

And when he had made Jerusalem all clean, he started through all the land, with the priests of God and with his soldiers; and everywhere they went, they found the images of Baal. And they broke them down, and called all the people back to worship the true God.

At last, they came to a place called Bethel, where there was an altar and a

temple to the sun. And in it was a golden calf, which Jeroboam, a great king, had made many, many years before. And here the people of Israel had long done evil. So when Josiah came there, he commanded his men to grind to powder the golden calf, and to burn all the images. And when he looked about him, in the mountains he saw the sepulchers, or graves, of men who had long been dead. And he told his men to go and gather bones from these graves. And when they had done so, he burned the bones upon the altar, to defile the place; for then, he knew, people would never worship the sun again there.

As they were gathering the bones from the sepulchers, Josiah saw a monument at one of the graves. And he said, "What is that?" Then they told him this story:

"Long, long ago, when Jeroboam first built this altar and this temple, there came a prophet out of Judah, and he came here and stretched out his hand, and cried, 'O altar, altar, thus says Jehovah, There shall be a child born, Josiah by name; and upon

you shall he sacrifice your wicked priests, and he shall burn men's bones upon you.'

"Then the king Jeroboam was angry at the prophet, and he stretched out his hand toward him, saying, 'Lay hold on him.' But his arm which he stretched out was withered, so that he could not draw it back again. Then he felt very humble, and he asked the prophet to pray for him. The prophet did pray for him, and his arm was healed.

" 'Come home with me,' said the king then, 'and eat and drink and rest; and I will give you a reward.'

"But the prophet said: 'I will not; for Jehovah charged me, saying, You shall eat no bread, nor drink water, nor return by the way you came.' And he turned and started home another way.

"But there was an old man there who once had been a prophet of Jehovah, but who had left Him. And when he heard what the prophet had done, he saddled his ass and started after him. And when he came up with him, he said, 'Come back with



The lion stood by the prophet he had slain.

me; for an angel told me to ask you to come.' But he lied to him. Then the prophet believed him; and because he was tired and hungry, he turned around and went back with the old man. And when he was rested, he started on his way again. But he had gone only a little way when a lion met him, and slew him, because he had not obeyed God.

"Then the old man, when he heard of it, went after him, and picked him up, and brought him back to Bethel. And he made a sepulcher, and built a monument over it, and there he buried the prophet, and there he himself afterwards was buried. And that monument," said they to Josiah, "is the monument you see yonder, the monument of the prophet who called you by name so many, many years before you were born, and told what you should do to this place."

And when Josiah heard that, he said: "Let him be. Let no man touch his bones." And so they left him where he lay.

Then, when the good king Josiah had gone through all the cities, and had broken down all the altars of Baal, and brought the people back to worship Jehovah, he came back to Jerusalem. And there he gathered all the people from all over the land to keep the Passover. They came on foot, and they came on horseback, and they came on camels and in carriages, thousands and thousands of them, to keep the Passover. For they were very glad that they had turned again to serve the true God, and that they no longer worshiped idols of wood and stone and gold. And so great a feast did they have, and so many were the people who came, that it was said there never had been a Passover like that Passover, since the days of Samuel the seer. And all the people praised the Lord God Jehovah, because He had given them such a ruler as the good king Josiah.



He came to the palaces and the great men's houses.

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The Child Prophet



IN the days of good King Josiah, there lived among the priests a little boy whose name was Jeremiah. He was a timid little fellow, with great tearful brown eyes, and sweet, gentle ways. He studied the law of God, and he loved God, and felt very sorry for the evil ways of all the people.

So one day the Lord God came to Jeremiah, as He had once long before to the little Samuel; and He said, "Before you were born, I knew you, and made up My mind to have you for a prophet to all the people."

But the little boy Jeremiah said, "O Jehovah God, I cannot prophesy, for I am only a child."

Then Jehovah God looked upon the shrinking little fellow, and He said: "Never mind if you are only a child. For every-

where I send you, you can go; and everything I tell you, you can speak. You shall not be afraid of the wicked people. For I have made you like a walled city; I have made your slender little body like an iron pillar; I have made your tender little face like a brazen wall against the men that do evil."

So the boy Jeremiah was set to be a prophet in a very wicked land. He went up to Jerusalem, the great city where the beautiful temple of God was. And as he went through the streets of the city, he found people making altars in the streets to the sun god and the moon god and the star gods, and worshiping them, instead of worshiping Jehovah God. They gathered at the street corners, and there they set up images of Baal and of the queen of heaven, and put altars before them. Then the children ran about to gather wood, the fathers put it on the altars and started the fires, the mothers and the maidens kneaded dough into cakes and baked them there, to pretend to feed the senseless idols.

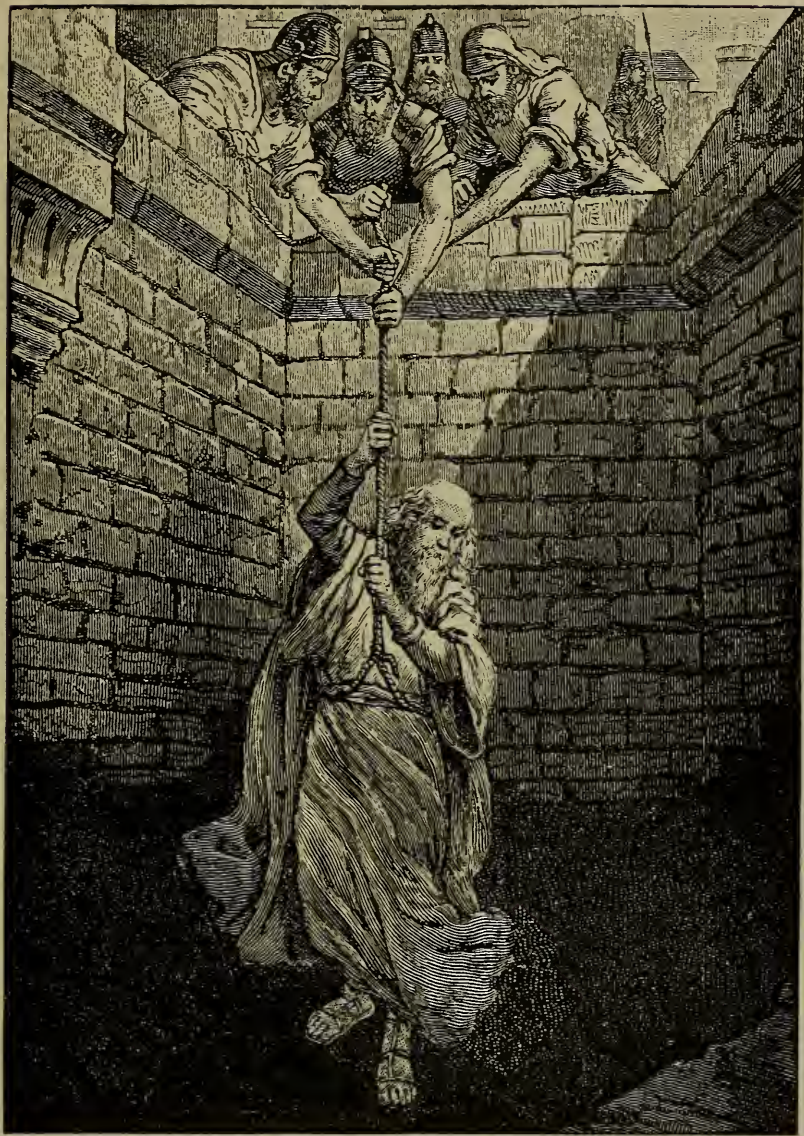
Then the Spirit of God came upon the child Jeremiah, and he stood and cried: "Are you not ashamed to say to a piece of wood, 'You are my father,' and to a stone, 'You are my mother'? How can you steal, and murder, and swear falsely, and worship all these idols, and then go up to God's great temple, and say, 'We are allowed to do all these wicked things'? Is this house, which is called by My name, saith Jehovah, become a den of robbers in your eyes?"

But most of the people would not listen to the little prophet. Then he went on, and he said to himself, "Surely I must expect these poor people to be foolish; I will go to the great men and speak to them, for they know Jehovah God." So he came to the palaces and the great men's houses, and spoke to them. But he found that they were wicked too, and were leading the people to do these wicked things. And the little prophet was almost discouraged. "Oh," he cried, "that my head were a fountain of tears, that mine eyes might run rivers of water for the sins of my people!"

Then the Lord God came and gave him courage. "It is a wicked nation," He said, "and they will not hear you. But you shall not be afraid of them: they shall fight against you, but they shall not conquer you. And some of them will hear, and these will I give you for your people."

Then the little prophet Jeremiah was brought to the good king Josiah. The king had looked upon the wickedness of the people too, and he had just begun to try to make them good. He set out with his soldiers, and cast down the idols, and ground them to powder; and he made the people come back to worship Jehovah. Some of them did it with all their hearts, but the most of them did it only because the king made them do it.

And after the death of good King Josiah, the people turned again to their idols. Then Jeremiah, who had grown up to be a man, preached again to the people, to turn them from their evil ways. But they hated him. They took him and cast him into a deep pit in the court of the prison. There



They cast him into a deep pit.

was mire in the bottom, and Jeremiah sank down into the mire. But there was a good black man in the king's house, named Ebed-melech, who went and got ropes and let them down to Jeremiah, with old rags to put under his arms so the ropes would not cut, and then he drew Jeremiah up. But Jeremiah still had to stay in prison.

Yet he had some faithful friends. One of them was named Baruch. He would write what Jeremiah spoke for the people, and then he would carry it out and read it to them. And though the most of them were wicked, and would not listen, there were some who did listen, and loved God, and did right. One of these was a boy named Daniel, and he had three friends who were like him. Their parents, too, loved God; and in their homes there were many prayers offered for the prophet Jeremiah, who had been so faithful from his childhood in teaching the ways of God.

At last, the city was taken by the king of Babylon, and Jeremiah was set free, to go where he pleased. Daniel and his

friends were carried to Babylon, where they became great in God's work. But the king of Babylon told Jeremiah he might do as he chose: if he would go to Babylon, the king would make him a great man; but he was free to go where he would. The king was carrying most of the men of Judah to Babylon, but he left a few in the land; and Jeremiah would not leave these, for he wanted to help them still to serve God. So he stayed with the few poor people there in the desolate land; and even as when he was a boy, so now when he was a man, he taught the people the ways of Jehovah God, until his death.



The people who were passing by stopped to hear him.



The BOY

in the

Wilderness



IN the days of Herod the king, there was a father named Zacharias, and a mother named Elisabeth, and a little boy named John. John was the only child Zacharias and Elisabeth had. Like the little Jeremiah, he had been called even before his birth to be a prophet of God. Now in the days when John lived, there were no prophets, and there had not been any for a long, long time. And his father and mother were anxious to train him just right for a prophet.

They did not dare stay in the city with him, for fear he would learn its evil ways; so they took their little boy John and went out into the country that was called the Wilderness of Judea. There they had a house; there was land to make gardens and

sow fields; there were caves for sheepfolds; there was pasture for flocks and herds. It was not a very beautiful country; for while in places there were trees and grass, for the most part the land was broken and rocky, and in some places bare of everything but sand and rocks.

The little boy John grew up here in the wilderness. He learned to take care of the few sheep and cows they had, he learned to plow the ground and sow the seed and reap the harvest. And on the Sabbath days and in the evenings, he went out among the trees and the rocks, and talked with God. He studied the Bible; for he knew he must do this in order to know what he was to teach the people. For John was to be the greatest prophet that ever lived. He was to be the prophet that would tell the people of Jesus' coming as the Christ, the King, the Saviour of the world.

John's mother and father taught him how to read and write; and they taught him all they could of the blessed word of God. But this was not all they taught him.

They taught him to be quick and earnest, to do everything that needed to be done, and to do it on time. They taught him that fine clothes do not make a man; and they taught him that to eat everything he wanted and whenever he wanted it, would not make a good prophet. A man and a prophet must be simple and self-denying.

So as John grew up, he lived on the simplest food, the fruit of the locust tree, and the honey that the wild bees made. And the clothing he wore was not the fine raiment worn by those who live in kings' houses. No; it was made of coarse camel's hair, and was bound about his waist with a leather belt. But he grew up sturdy and strong, with a straight, supple body and a strong mind. He could not be tempted to be weak, nor peevish, nor angry, nor cross; but though he was strong, he was forgiving; and though he was stern to himself, he was kind to others.

And the day came at last when he was to go and tell the people that Jesus was coming. So then the strong young prophet

in the wilderness went forth and stood by the waters of the Jordan, crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make His paths straight; for the Christ is coming, and the kingdom of God is at hand." Then the people who were passing by stopped to hear him; and they asked him, "What shall we do?"

"Repent of your sins," said the prophet, "be baptized, and have your hearts right to receive the Christ." So the people went down into the water and were baptized by John. And everywhere they went, they carried the news, "The prophet of the Christ is come out of the wilderness, and is preaching repentance and baptism by the Jordan."

So all the people of all the cities, and all the people from all the country, went out to hear John preach. "What shall we do?" they cried. And the prophet who had lived in the wilderness told them to leave their evil and their weakness, to be simple and to be true. "Whoever has two coats," he said, "let him give one to him who has none.

Whoever has more than he needs to eat, let him share with him who is hungry. Do not grow angry. Strike no one. Be content with what you have, and seek the kingdom of God; for the Christ is near at hand."

Then all the people began to think, "Perhaps this John is the Christ Himself." But he said: "No, I am not the Christ. He is coming soon. I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord.' Repent and be converted; for the Christ is coming soon."

So many were converted, and were ready to receive Jesus when He came. And Jesus was glad to see John. He was glad he had grown so strong and true; and He said of this boy who had lived in the wilderness, "Never was there a greater prophet."



There they saw Jesus, the little lad.



A LAD *of* GALILEE



IN the days when John the Baptist was yet a boy, there lived in a little town in Galilee a lad just twelve years old. He was said to be the carpenter's son; for Joseph, whom His mother Mary had married, was the village carpenter.

And this boy learned very early to help Joseph in the shop and in building houses and in all sorts of work. He learned, too, to help His mother in the house. But when the day's work was done, He loved to go quietly away to the fields and the woods and along the streams, where He could see the winds stirring the branches, and hear the birds singing, and watch the fishes playing in the waters. He watched the red lilies growing up on their slender stems; and as he looked at them, He thought, "Even Solomon in all his glory was not

arrayed like one of these." And as He saw the birds flitting from tree to tree, and heard them singing their glad songs, He thought: "These birds of the air, they do not sow, nor reap, nor store up in barns; yet My heavenly Father feeds them. Will He not much more care for all of us?" And as He drank of the clear waters flowing over the rocks in the little brooks, He thought: "The wellspring of wisdom is like a flowing stream. And with joy shall we draw water out of the wells of salvation."

At His mother's knee, He learned to read the Scriptures; and on the Sabbath days, when He went with His mother and His half brothers to the synagogue, so good a reader was He that He was often called on by the rabbi to read the Bible lesson for the day. So much did He study the Bible, that He could remember and repeat it whether He had the book with Him or not; and when He went out into the woods and the fields and talked to His heavenly Father, the words of that same heavenly Father which He had learned in the Bible

would come back to Him in answer. So, pure and true and lovely, grew up the boy Jesus among the hills of Nazareth.

To one thing He looked forward with joy, and that was the day when He should be twelve years old, and Joseph and Mary would take Him with them when they went up to the feast at Jerusalem. For not till a boy was twelve years old could he go up to the feast. And at last, that day came for the boy Jesus. With many a shout of joy, with laughter of young men and maidens and children, with the glad commands of the leaders, the caravan of people moved off toward the south, toward the great and holy city Jerusalem.

The days were long ones of marching, but they never grew too weary for the boy of Nazareth. And the nights were wonderful times, with the stars shining down upon the encampment, while the voices of the elders ran on in endless tales of the glorious deeds of their fathers and the great works of God. And finally, after days and days of travel, they came up over the moun-

tains to where they could see the great city, with its beautiful temple of snowy white walls and its blazing golden roof. Then they all shouted for joy. They knelt down to pray; and rising, they marched joyfully forward to the city of the feast of the great God.

The little boy Jesus went up to the temple, and watched the priests slaying the lambs while the people confessed their sins and asked for them to be forgiven because of the shed blood. And as He had watched the lilies grow and the birds sing and the waters run, and had found in them lessons from God, so now He found the lessons that were meant in the sacrifice of lambs and bullocks. For the word of God He had studied came to His mind. "God will provide Himself a lamb," He had heard it said by Abraham. "Behold, My servant," He remembered His heavenly Father had said, "is brought as a lamb to the slaughter;" and there His heavenly Father taught Him that the blood of the lamb the priest was slaying could not take away sins, but it

was meant to point to the Lamb of God, the Christ who should die for His people and so take away their sins. And there, as He stood, He heard God say, "My Son, Thou art the Lamb of God." So for the



This boy learned very early to help Joseph in the shop.

first time in His life, this little lad of Galilee came to know that He was to be the Saviour of the world.

But Joseph and Mary, as the days of the feast went on, forgot their boy. So quiet was He, and so careful, that they felt they

need not watch out for Him. And when the feast was ended, and they started home, Joseph and Mary went along with all the people, without seeing Jesus. They thought He was somewhere in the company. Not till the night came, and they missed His help, did they know He was lost.

Then they sorrowfully went back alone to Jerusalem, and searched everywhere for Him; but they could not find Him. Oh, how sad they were as they thought they might never see their beautiful, loving boy again! But once more they came up into the temple; and there, as they came near one of the rooms, they heard His voice. How glad they were! They entered the room, and there they saw Jesus, the little lad, sitting in the midst of all the old, grave teachers, asking them questions and listening to their answers. The teachers thought they were teaching the boy Jesus. But they were really learning of Him; for the wonderful things He had heard from God here at the feast, He was opening up to their minds by His questions.

As Joseph and Mary saw Him, they called Him to them; and then Mary said: "Son, why have You done this way with us? Do You know Your father and I have been seeking You sorrowfully these three days?"

But Jesus had learned that He was not the son of Joseph, but the Son of God. He had learned that He had a great work to do for His heavenly Father; and He answered gently: "How was it that you sought Me? Did you not know I must be doing the work of My Father?" Then He went with them obediently; and on the long journey alone up to their home in Nazareth, He taught them something of the things He had learned at the feast. Still, in the home, and in the shop, and in the fields, He lived as the simple boy Jesus, just a lad of Galilee, until the day that John's voice was heard, saying, "Repent and be baptized, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Then Jesus left His Nazareth home, and went out to show Himself the Saviour of the world.

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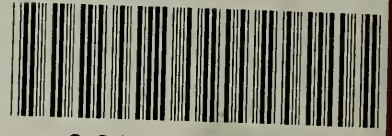
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